We sell our time no more: workers' struggles against lean production in the British car industry

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Abstract

This is the story of struggles against management regimes in the car industry in Britain from the period after the Second World War until the contemporary regime of lean production. Told from the viewpoint of the workers, the book chronicles how workers responded to a variety of management and union strategies, from piece rate working, through measured day work, and eventually to lean production beginning in the late 1980s. The book focuses on two companies, Vauxhall-GM and Rover/BMW, and how they developed their approaches to managing labour relations. Worker responses to these are intimately tied to changing patterns of exploitation in the industry. The book highlights the relative success of various forms of struggle to establish safer and more humane working environments. The contributors bring together original research gathered over two decades, plus exclusive surveys of workers in four automotive final assembly plants over a ten year period.

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